



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS STUDIES MIGRATIONS OF FOXES ON PRAIRIE STATES

Because a westward surge of foxes has created predation and control problems on the western prairies, the Fish and Wildlife Service and State agencies have instituted a migration study on that animal in North Dakota. Initial results reveal Br'er Fox is quite a traveler on occasion.

In May of last year the Fish and Wildlife Service ear-tagged 86 fox pups in North Dakota. Up to the present time 18 of these tagged foxes have been recovered. One of them had traveled a distance of 75 airline miles, another 45 miles, while a third had gone nine miles from the place of tagging. The other fifteen were found in the general neighborhood of their dens.

While the Service officials do not consider these fragmentary results as being conclusive evidence of a general fox migration pattern, they do accept the fact that the animals can get a long distance from home in a few months after puppyhood. As more of the tagged animals are recovered, the officials feel that they will have additional data to aid any long-range control programs which might be necessary.

The results of the migration study are being closely watched by Service officials in those States where the fox is a serious carrier of rabies. Rabies is not a problem with the North Dakota foxes but whatever is learned there in regard to the fox's habits of movement will probably be of value in control programs in areas where rabies among the animals is prevalent.

The Fish and Wildlife Service officials in North Dakota have also ear-tagged a few coyotes and several bobcats. A coyote pup was taken 60 miles from where he was marked. The bobcat is becoming a problem in the Dakotas and the tagging program may bring forth some information to guide control of that animal.

Several years ago the Fish and Wildlife Service carried on an ear-tagging program with Yellowstone Park coyotes. That work showed that some coyotes migrated over a hundred miles.

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